

A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE NANCY JONES HOUSE

WHY IS IT CALLED THE NANCY JONES HOUSE?



Historic homes are often referred to by the names of their early owners or occupants. In this case, the house is named for Nancy Ann Jones, who lived there from the time of her marriage to Henry Jones until her death in 1876.¹ Mrs. Jones ran a stagecoach stop and tavern on the property throughout most of her adult life.²

This photo from a newspaper article found in the NC archives bears the heading, “At Her Home Spake Dudley,” referring to the famous quote, “It’s been a damn long time between drinks,” which is said to have taken place in her tavern.

JONES WAS A PROMINENT NAME IN WAKE COUNTY’S EARLY YEARS. WHICH JONES WAS NANCY?

To answer this, we look to the late 1700s, when there were at least four men in Wake County named Nathaniel Jones. To keep track of “who’s who” for public records, they added the initials of their place of residence to their names. The two most prominent of these were Nathaniel Jones of Crabtree (C.T.) and Nathaniel Jones of White Plains (W.P), Nancy’s father. Nancy married the son of Nathaniel Jones of Crabtree, Henry Jones, bringing the families of these two large landowners together.²

WHEN WAS THE NANCY JONES BUILT?

It is believed that the Nancy Jones House was built around 1803, by Nathaniel Jones, possibly with his son, Henry.²

WHO WERE THE EARLY RESIDENTS?

Henry and Nancy Jones lived there from the time of their marriage in 1810. Henry died in 1841, but Nancy continued to live there and run the tavern and stagecoach stop until her very last years. She died in 1876, at the age of 93.³

WHO OWNED THE NANCY JONES HOUSE?

ca. 1803	Nathaniel Jones ²
1810 – 1841	Henry and Nancy Ann Jones ²
1841 – ca. 1870	Nancy Ann Jones ²
1876 – 1878	Adolphus Jones ^{2, 3}
1878 - 1923	S. R. Horne, Henry Adams, Russell O. Heater and others unknown ^{2, 3}
1935 – 1991	Thomas and Audrey Stone (purchased in 1935 from Henry Adams) ²
1991 – 2004	Mark Wilson, George Wilson and April Gillespie, the Stones’ nephews and niece ^{3,4,5}
2004 – 2016	April and David Gillespie ^{4,5}
2016 – 2019	Sri Venkateswara Temple of North Carolina ⁶
2019 – Present	Town of Cary ⁷

[\(more\)](#)

WHAT ROLE DID THE PROPERTY PLAY IN DAILY LIFE IN CARY?

The stagecoach and tavern stop run by Nancy Jones pre-dates Cary's 1871 incorporation as a town, but there is no doubt that it played an important part in daily life in the Cary area. In fact, prior to the establishment of Cary, the area was known as the Jones community².

In a 2000 article in *The Cary News*³, the daughter of Russell Heater, Marjorie Herring, recalled other activities that took place on the Nancy Jones property from the time Ms. Herring lived there as a child during the Depression. She remembered "hobos" coming from the train to ask for food. She said that even though the family "didn't have a great deal of money," her mother never refused them.

Mrs. Herring also recalled another type of visitor who showed up at their door after her family first moved in: those seeking the services of prostitutes. She said, "If Daddy was there, he'd enlighten them quickly. If mother was there alone, she would slam the door in their faces and tell them to go away."³

IS THE NANCY JONES HOUSE REALLY HAUNTED?

For most of us, it is just a matter of speculation. But Marjorie Herring was convinced that the house was truly haunted. In an interview with *The Cary News* in 2000³, she describes doors that were locked at night being found mysteriously unlocked in the morning, hearing footsteps coming up the stairs and sounds they couldn't identify.

WHERE CAN I READ THE ENTIRE NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION FOR THE NANCY JONES?

The nomination of a property for recognition on the National Register of Historic Places involves a great deal of research to provide a detailed description of the property and its place in history. To learn more about the historic context of the Nancy Jones House, as well as details of the house's interior and other fascinating facts, read the National Register Registration Form for the Ivey-Ellington House here:

<https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/WA0187.pdf>

FOOTNOTES

¹Byrd, Thomas M., *Around and About Cary* (Ann Arbor, MI, Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1994)

²National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Nancy Jones House, <https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/WA0187.pdf>

³Williamson, Sherry, "This Old House," *The Cary News*, March 8, 2000

⁴North Carolina General Warranty Deed, conveying Tracts 1 and 2, Audrey W. Stone Estate, by Mark Darrell Wilson to April W. Gillespie, August 23, 2004

⁵North Carolina General Warranty Deed conveying Tracts 1 and 2, Audrey W. Stone Estate, by George Douglas Wilson and wife, Sandra Wilson, to April W. Gillespie, August 23, 2004

⁶North Carolina General Warranty Deed conveying Tracts 1 and 2, by April W. Gillespie and David F. Gillespie to Sri Venkateswara Temple of North Carolina, December 9, 2016

⁷*Cary Acquires Oldest Remaining Home – 1803 Nancy Jones House – for Preservation, Rehabilitation*, Town of Cary News Release, posted May 30, 2019